

Applic. No.: 09/927,555
Amdt. Dated November 24, 2004
Reply to Office action of June 25, 2004

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1, 3, 5-6, and 9-35 remain in the application. Claims 1, 3, 5-6, 13-17, 22-25, 27, 30, 33, and 35 have been amended. Claims 2, 4, and 7-8 have been cancelled. Claims 33-34 have been withdrawn and rejoinder of claims 33-34 has been requested.

In the third paragraph on page 2 of the above-mentioned Office action, claims 1-3, 5-6, 8-11, 21-28, 30-31, and 35 have been rejected as being anticipated by Great Britain Patent No. 1,085,743 (hereinafter "GB '743") under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

In the second paragraph on page 3 of the above-mentioned Office action, claims 4, 7, 12, 29, and 32 have been rejected as being unpatentable over GB '743 in view of Weisperber (US Pat. No. 4,643,414) under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

In the fourth paragraph on page 3 of the above-mentioned Office action, claims 13-20 have been rejected as being unpatentable over GB '743 in view of Platsch (US Pat. No. 6,038,998) under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

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The rejections have been noted and claims 1, 22-25, 27, 30, and 35 have been amended in an effort to even more clearly define the invention of the instant application. Support for the changes is found on page 25, line 12; page 27, line 1; page 24, lines 7-20; page 10, line 13; and page 26, line 23 of the specification as well as original claim 4.

Before discussing the prior art in detail, it is believed that a brief review of the invention as claimed, would be helpful.

Claim 1, 22-25, 27, 30, and 35 call for, inter alia:

at least one fan unit having one of a sequence of ionic fans and a matrix configuration of ionic fans, said ionic fans being supplied with a voltage for generating and accelerating gas ions by a discharge for accelerating non-ionized gas by pulse transmission and generating the air stream, said ionic fans being one of individually controlled and individually regulated by the voltage in order to generate one of a desired flow profile and a desired flow field.

According to the invention of the instant application, the device for generating an air stream includes a sequence or a matrix configuration of voltage supplied ionic fans being individually voltage controlled or regulated in order to generate a flow profile or flow field.

GB '743 teaches a sheet hold-down device including electrostatic means for electrostatically holding a sheet

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against a surface, in which the electrostatic means is not controllable. The device also includes different hold-down means for directing air against the sheet, which is controllable.

Although the device of GB '743 includes two different hold-down means, only one of the two hold-down means is controllable (the means supplied with air under pressure) and the other one (the electrostatic means) is not controllable and can only be switched on and off. Thus, the Examiner has correctly stated in the third paragraph on page 3 of the Office action that the ionic fans of GB '743 are not individually controlled to generate a desired flow field.

Weisperber teaches individually controllable mechanical fans (see column 8, lines 31-57). A combination of GB '743 and Weisperber would not lead a person skilled in the art to the invention of the instant application because he or she would not take the feature of controllability from the mechanical fans disclosed by Weisperber and transfer this feature to the electrostatic hold-down means disclosed in GB '743. The device of GB '743 already has the feature of controllability: the air hold-down means, which is supplied with air under pressure, can be controlled. Therefore, there is no motivation for a person skilled in the art to have the

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electrostatic hold-down means controllable in addition or alternatively. The Examiner did not provide any evidence to show why a person skilled in the art should or would make the electrostatic hold-down means controllable although there is no need to do so since the air hold-down means is already controllable.

Even if a person skilled in the art would think about having a second controllable hold-down means, he or she would replace the electrostatic hold-down means by the mechanical fans of Weisgerber and use the combination of air-supplied pipes and mechanical ventilators taught by Weisgerber.

Platsch does not make up for the deficiencies of the combination of GB '743 and Weisperber.

It is accordingly believed to be clear that none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, either show or suggest the features of claims 1, 22-25, 27, 30, and 35. Claims 1, 22-25, 27, 30, and 35 are, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art and since all of the dependent claims are ultimately dependent on claims 1, 25, 27, and 30, they are believed to be patentable as well.

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In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1, 3, 5-6, and 9-35 are solicited. Rejoinder of method claims 33-34 is requested upon allowance of product claims 1 and 22-25 under MPEP 821.04 ("if applicant elects claims directed to the product, and a product claim is subsequently found allowable, withdrawn process claims which depend from or otherwise include all the limitations of the allowable product claim will be rejoined").

In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, counsel would appreciate a telephone call so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked out.

Petition for extension is herewith made. The extension fee for response within a period of two months pursuant to Section 1.136(a) in the amount of \$430.00 in accordance with Section 1.17 is enclosed herewith.

Please charge any other fees which might be due with respect

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to 37 CFR Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of
Lerner and Greenberg, P.A., No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,



For Applicants

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November 24, 2004

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